

Q&A Exclusive: Tommy Trash & The Alley Cats keep '80s ROCK ALIVE

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
Friday, 02 March 2018 10:39



Many people who grew up in the 1980s still look back fondly on the decade's cultural moment: big hair and shoulder pads, iconic movies, and a spectrum of music from punk to hard rock that molded a generation. Standing the test of time, the '80s rock 'n' roll genre is one that still can trigger a memory for anyone who was around for its inception.

In Albuquerque, '80s rock 'n' roll is still alive and well, thanks to local rock band Tommy Trash & The Alley Cats, who blast out '80s nostalgia before enthused crowds. Forming in January of 2017, group leader Tommy "Trash" Vigil first recruited his bandmates to play some old AC/DC hits.

The lineup now includes Tommy Vigil on lead guitar, Eddie Bortot on lead vocals, Kevin White on bass guitar, and Clay Trujillo as their drummer. Both Vigil and Bortot have roots in Gallup, but now call Duke City their home. The band is headed to Gallup March 10, to play during downtown's ArtsCrawl.

The *Sun* interviewed vocalist Bortot to find out more about the band, and why the '80s have a

Q&A Exclusive: Tommy Trash & The Alley Cats keep '80s ROCK ALIVE

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
Friday, 02 March 2018 10:39

such a big influence on their sound.

Sun: Hey Eddie, thanks for taking the time out to do this, I really appreciate it.

Bortot: Oh no problem. Glad to do it, Tommy of course you know is under the weather so he told me about it, so glad to do it.

Sun: Cool. Tell me, how did you guys come up with the name?

Bortot: Well, it's Tommy's band and he basically recruited everybody in the band. We had all played in different bands before. He invited us one day to jam some old Bon Scott tunes you know from the earlier AC/DC days. We all live in Albuquerque currently but Tommy and I are originally from Gallup, so we already knew each other. He asked what should we call the band; pretty much we all gave our input and we said, "hey it's your band so why not after you," and that's how we came up with the name. We then acquired a gig and started playing in January 2017, and pretty much just playing in New Mexico. Pretty much the "bread and butter" is playing AC/DC songs.

Sun: I'll be honest with you, now when I first saw you guys on YouTube you guys didn't look like a rock 'n' roll band, if all else perhaps a band that played Santana and music along that genre. Is that the same reaction you get when people hear you the first time?

Bortot: Well, it depends on the venue where we're playing. We do have a small following. We have a "Blues Brothers" image you know from the movie, and when we do play our '80s music they begin to like us even more. We want to keep the '80s alive with our music.

Sun: I was blown away that you guys play a lot of cover songs that some bands don't, like Saxxon, The Cult, and Krokus. I mean you just don't do the ordinary, but I also noticed you do cuts from bands like, Ratt, Van Halen, Scorpions, Black Sabbath, Dio, Iron Maiden, and of course AC/DC. You guys are definitely '80s metal heads.

Q&A Exclusive: Tommy Trash & The Alley Cats keep '80s ROCK ALIVE

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
Friday, 02 March 2018 10:39

Bortot: I don't know how we got into it, we just started singing them and at first we had a playlist but over the course we started doing other songs. Some of these songs are hard to sing and put a lot of strain on my voice. Tommy and Kevin have been very supportive and told me to not give up, so they kept pushing me. So, 80's metal is pretty much what we do, a lot of Bon Scott and Brian Johnson songs from earlier AC/DC stuff, we try to do the AC/DC stuff later on in the set because it does put a strain on my voice. But the core is mostly from the '80s; we focus on this genre and pretty much stick to it.

But you never know what we are going to play. We have people asking 'are you going to play this song or that.' We have over 50 songs. We sometimes may play something different. Just like I said, it depends on the venue.

Sun: That is way cool! I always like to ask this question because each answer is unique and there's a reason behind it. How did you get into music and who were your biggest influences?

Bortot: My mom is my biggest influence, she would come home and bring these vinyls with the scariest album covers on them [laughing]. She bought me my first KISS albums, I grew up listening to Jimi Hendrix, The Beatles, and AC/DC. I listened to AC/DC and my mom bought me the albums. I favor Bon Scott over Brian Johnson. I was hooked into the '80s metal.

Sun: Have you personally had the privilege of meeting any of these bands that you play?

Bortot: I've seen AC/DC twice and recently seen Iron Maiden. I've been to a lot of concerts here in Albuquerque, I've seen Danzig and different types of genres. It's awesome to see these types of things. But as for face to face, I haven't had that chance yet.

Sun: If you weren't doing this what would be your second dream?

Bortot: I have no idea, when I lived in Gallup I did mixed martial arts, that was kind of my first dream and when this opportunity came I took advantage of it. At first it didn't almost happen because of a death in my family but luckily the opportunity came again.

Q&A Exclusive: Tommy Trash & The Alley Cats keep '80s ROCK ALIVE

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
Friday, 02 March 2018 10:39

Sun: If you had a chance to hang out with one of your favorite musicians, who would it be and why?

Bortot: I would have to say Ace Frehley of KISS, he's been my childhood hero and I can identify with him more than any of the other members.

Sun: When you told me this earlier I couldn't believe it but right now you are working in Albuquerque as a principal at Kennedy Middle School. I thought that was so cool to have a heavy metal principal and I have to give you props for what you're doing.

Bortot: Thank you, yes I love what I am doing and it's funny when the kids come up to me and tell me, "Mr. Bortot I saw you on YouTube singing away to AC/DC." They do freak out when they see me on there. I tell them it's never too late to follow your dream, to believe in yourself and follow your passion.

Sun: That is so way cool! I wish I could chat with more but I know you have a busy schedule. But you guys will be here in Gallup performing in front of Quintana's Music and Native Indian Jewelry on Saturday, March 10 right?

Bortot: Yes, that's correct, we'll be jamming March 10 in front of Quintana's. We would like to thank Ryan and Rhonda Quintana for bringing us back to Gallup. We love it and always a good time. We are looking forward to play in our hometown and seeing old friends.

For more information on Tommy Trash & The Alley Cats visit Facebook: Tommy Trash & The Alley Cats.

By Dee Velasco

Q&A Exclusive: Tommy Trash & The Alley Cats keep '80s ROCK ALIVE

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
Friday, 02 March 2018 10:39

For the Sun